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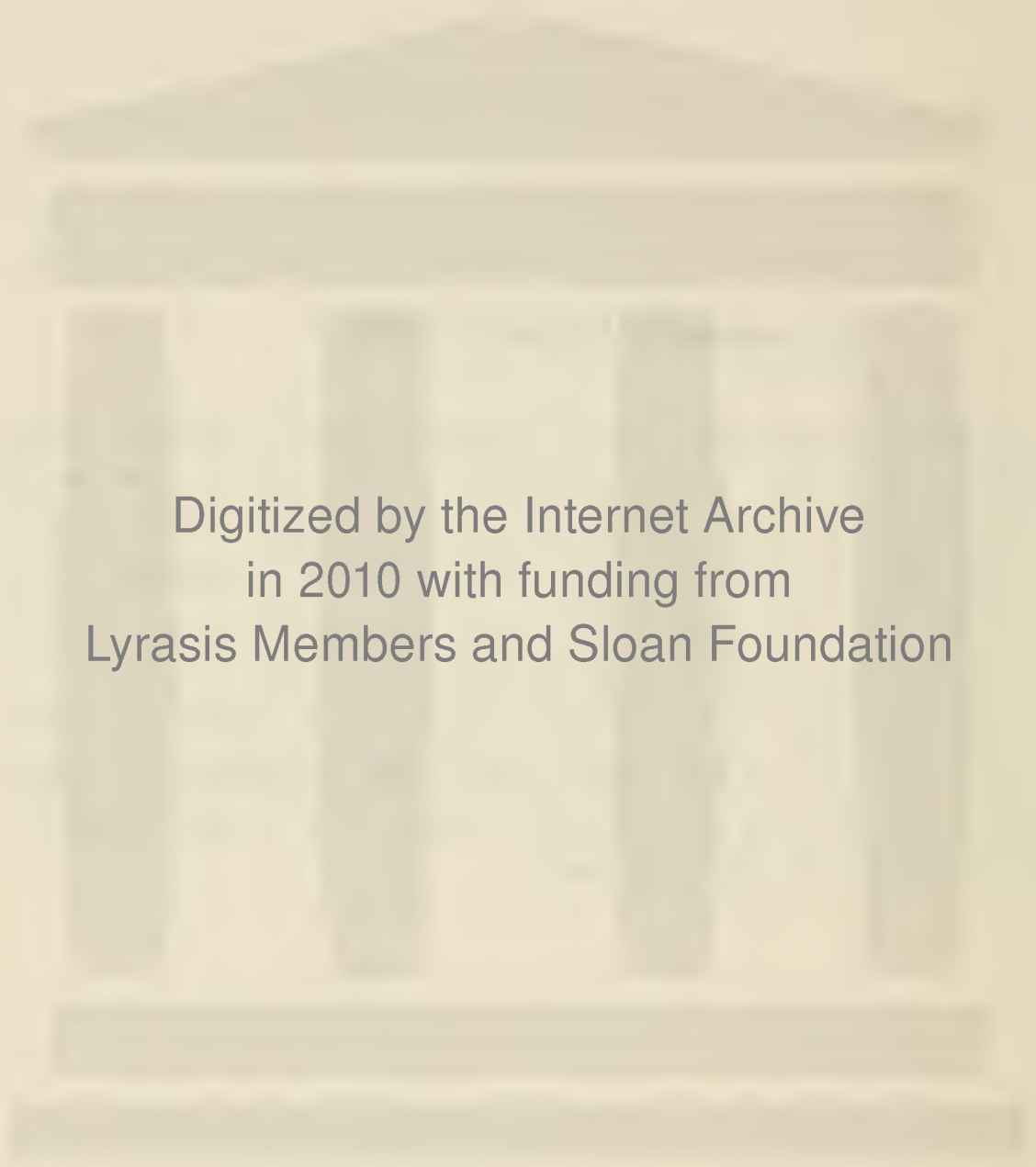
THE NOISELESS SPIDER

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Statement of Editorial Policy

The editorial board of *The Noiseless Spider* agrees with Henry Miller that the pangs of birth relate not to the body but to the spirit. It was demanded of us to know love, experience union and communion, and thus achieve liberation from the wheel of life and death. But we have chosen to remain this side of Paradise and to create through art the illusory substance of our dreams. In a profound sense we are forever delaying the act. We flirt with destiny and lull ourselves to sleep with myth. We die in the throes of our own tragic legends, like spiders caught in our own web.



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\$50.00 PRIZE WINNER

John M. Grudzien's "Fools and Saviours" is the recipient of this issue's special \$50 award for the best literary work submitted to THE NOISELESS SPIDER by a student.

Yánnis Rítsos

Since the death of Nobel Prize Winner George Seféris in 1971, Yánnis Rítsos is easily the greatest and most influential living poet in Greece. He was born in 1909 in Monemvasía in the southeastern Peloponnésos.

In 1936 his long poem, EPITÁPHIOS (REQUIEM)—later set to music by the composer Míkis Theodorákis—was burned publicly near the Temple of Zeus in Athens on orders of the Metaxás dictatorship. Rítsos has always been very active in working-class and radical struggles, has fought in the Greek Resistance to the Nazis in the early 1940's, and has spent over seven years of his life in hell-holes for Greek political prisoners such as Makrónnisos and Léros. While he was in concentration camps, he managed to continue writing poems which he hid in tin cans and buried. These were eventually smuggled out and clandestinely published. In addition to over 50 volumes of his own poetry, Rítsos has made brilliant translations of such poets as Vladímir Mayakóvsky, Nicholas Guillén, and Alexándr Blok ("The Twelve") into Greek. His magnificent ethno-political epic, ROMIOSÍNI (1966), has been made into a famous folk-cantata by Míkis Theodorákis and has become a battle-cry for Greek patriots and exiles all over the world.

During his imprisonments on various Greek prison-islands, Rítsos fell into the habit of collecting small stones on the beaches and of carving or painting images on them. He is an accomplished artist and many of these stones are extremely beautiful. Rítsos has saved hundreds of these and he often gives them as souvenirs to people who visit him at his home in Athens. It was the gift of three such miniature stone-paintings to me and my family on February 6, 1974, that inspired the short meditation called "Stones."

— *Bertrand Mathieu*

Kastaniá

Up there, like yesterday, they shot forty.
Twenty years have gone by. Nobody's spoken their names.
You understand our life. Each year,
on a similar day, they've been finding in hiding places
a ripped canvas, two extinguished braziers, a little incense,
a basketful of grapes, a candle
with a black wick. It's been almost impossible to light it.

 The wind's been blowing it out.
That's why, in the evening, the old women are sitting
 in the doorways like ancient ikons,
that's why the eyes of our children have grown
 large so quickly
and why our dogs pretend to look elsewhere
 when policemen pass by.

— *Yánnis Rítsos*

Translated from the Greek by Bertrand Mathieu

Return

The statues were the first ones to leave. After that it was the turn of the trees, of people, of animals. The place became completely deserted. There was nothing left but the wind.

Some newspapers, some weeds were blowing in the streets.

At night, the lights lit up by themselves.

A man came back, took a look around him,

took out his key, buried it in the ground

as if he were giving it to a subterranean hand,

or as if he were planting a tree. Then he stood up, climbed the marble stairs and looked at the city a long while.

One by one, cautiously, the statues were coming back.

— *Yánnis Rítsos*

Translated from the Greek by Bertrand Mathieu

Stones

(for Yánnis Rítsos)

The sea smoothes the rough edges of the stones
on the Greek beaches so well
it's hard to believe they were ever a part
of this jagged land.

The results are disastrous: they make
things seem much better than they
actually are. The water's boiling
in the garden well. The light of the oranges
grows cold. The stones
lie still.

These are realities that can be fully known
not by listening, but by talking—the poet
talks to the sea.

He knows the sea means well.

He knows the sea's also condemned to leaving
things out. He quietly paints back
on the stones he picks up on the beach
the images from the mainland they were
broken from: Two Women. Or a Grieving Girl.
Or a Troubled Sailor with a Tilted Blue Cap.

Does this make these stones seem less like our own?

— *Bertrand Mathieu*
Halandri, Greece
February 15, 1974

earthwork

my dead tree
touches tar—
fences crucifix,
vines join hands
in hope

And do I die too
so you
can feel?

your footsteps
disappear,
imperceptibly

in snow

I sit with green
obscurity and look
for masterminds
of rebirth

— *Claudia Stephens*



Something to Sing For A Dying Day

“What’s this—an allegory?”

“No; why? Not an allegory—a leaf, just a leaf. A leaf is good. Everything’s good.”

“Everything?”

“Everything.”

— *Brothers Karamazov*

First Movement

Follow a story long enough and it will end in death. That is something you can count on, anyway. When I was a kid I would read about cowboys and knights, guys who fought everything and won. The stories would all end the same way: ‘ . . . and they lived happily every after’. Later on, late at night when I was alone and lying in the dark, I would think about those stories and I’d wonder what happened next. I mean what happens to you when they say you live happily ever after. It bothered me somehow to think of the cowboys settling down on a farm with a wife and no guns. I never thought of kids. I always felt cheated, as though there was something they didn’t tell me.

Second Movement

I had not thought it would be that way. The old man never seemed old. We had always called him the old man, but we never thought of him that way. His face was young and lean right up to the end and I used to think he looked like Dempsey. He might have made a good fighter if he had had some confidence in himself. That was the way it was with him. He didn’t do things. So what does this all mean? I don’t know really. All I know is I want to try and remember him and maybe order things. Sometimes I close my eyes and try to imagine his face, but it isn’t any good. I can’t see him anymore. We were never very close, although I sensed there was something he wanted



to tell me. He'd been through a lot. It wasn't easy being a hobo in the '20's. But there are some things you just can't tell a guy. Not like it was anyway. You try but it only ends up sounding glamorous and not like it really was at all. Maybe that is why he was so quiet. I think about that a lot now, and it still doesn't seem all the way right. It was something more. Like why he never became a fighter.

Third Movement

"Don't move him. Just let him lie there. At least let him go without much pain." Billy could hear the men talking and it felt terrible. He hated them and everything for being so detached. They were talking about him in a way he did not like. "That's a bad wound. Keep the flies off it. Christ I wish we had a doctor. I don't know what the hell to do."

Fourth Movement

The boy waved the burning stick in the night air. Its glowing tip made all sorts of wonderful patterns that left an after-image on the retina. Orange-red fire lining and circling in the dark. It was such wonderful fun to be a creator, he thought, and he'd spin around, holding the stick at arm's length making figure eights, circles, waves and lines that would continue into one another without a break if only he moved fast enough. He did not notice the night. Slowly the red tip began to die out, and the boy got more frantic in his waving. He tried desperately to keep the shapes and glowing existence. The lines were not as thick and it became increasingly difficult for him to maintain their continuity. After the stick died out he stood quietly with his arms by his side. He felt cold standing there in the dark, and the sound of the wind made him feel very lonely, very alone. "The fire won't stay, Mommy. It won't stay. The circles won't stay either. All the lines and circles are gone." He wanted to hug his mother and cry, but something changed his mind without his noticing it. He stood alone and felt very cold inside. His mother stroked his blond hair and tried to gentle him. "It's only a stick, dear. You can light another one tomorrow. Fires can't burn forever. We'll light another one



tomorrow.” The little boy knew he was alone now, and didn’t feel like crying anymore. But he was very sad. He was also angry in a way he did not understand. He didn’t care about the sticks anymore, and he thought about his anger. “I don’t want to light any more sticks. I don’t want to light them ever again. I hate them.”

— *John Perry*

“In July”

canvas was only knitted thread
when i was younger. for i never
understood intent. but i remember
a painting of Gabriel’s pierced me:

a windmill had arms braced against a sky
of blues and greys.

a man stood bent—like a scythe—
wielded by wind (desiring earth).

i never thought of life, misery,
or simple pride of pheasants or
imagined knights sprouting
from fields and expanses: Don Quixotes with foolish expressions.

i never went that far.

i admired the oxen cart
though, that never reached
canvas quite, forever out of sight
tacked to the frame.

colorful tools and farmers have left me
like a stalk cut down in its prime.

and i really feel like that
with old stories or plays or poems or
paintings somehow. The meaning’s matured
but i think i knew pictures much
better then/ than now.

— *Ray Holland*

Fools and Savors

I'm waiting in the canyons
 alone on the hills
wasting my life away.

Watching my Fathers hands become weary
my Mothers arms grow cold
 I fled—
wishing to tell someone how I felt.

Now I bear the working week
wrapping fish on the pier—
remaining waterside
receiving the fisherman's wrath.

Living sparingly these days?
Oh no, I have pictures and collect pieces
 of old friends lives
 from the newspapers.

I should survive at the least—
 for pain and hunger
is for fools and saviors.

 —Epilogue—
Daddy, there still is time and place
 that holds memories—
 for a Saturday son . . .

— *John M. Grudzien*

of childhood

sticky summer nights
in pajamas and defiance reminds me.
i longed for the outside
to chase neighborhood girls
in cotton frocks
'round bushes
watched by a mantis
 (big beady eyes revolve
in the midst of dog berry).
 but in the bedroom
 strapped into the lap of sleep
 by tales of night horrors
 i'd stay and dream and shake.
mother dabs in the flour of pies
spreading out knees and thighs and dough.
father pounds—slung on the motor
of failing cars—jerking off
grease thickened parts.
 all the next day
 i'd carry 'round secrets
 like saw dust prints
 where feet had stomped
 on way to the kitchen.

— *Ray Holland*

Interlude

(To Rich Stephani)

Down dark leafed path
venturing warm vesper wood
straddling rocks, fallen trees
pass and drift in forest mist.

Tall thin silhouettes
reach and touch flick'ring stars.
Cat and dog on ahead
stir a pheasant from its nest.

Down slope, neighbor road.
Mud-sloshed, three-quarter mile
walk to edge of field.

From on distant tower,
lulling red light beams.
Slow train, simmering fog
soon this hides away.

Fir trees, silent, unflustered,
lined aside old stonewall.
Ah! To seize
cedar's sharp-spined leaves.

Clear quiet, the real quiet.
Highway's hushed tonight.
To come to witness conclusion
for what we are
and what we are
lies beneath our feet.

Old Woodbury Rd.,
Southbury, Connecticut
— March 8, 1973

— *Austin W. Fenn Jr.*

Absurd

Absurd, Absurd

 The things I heard

 The things I thought I saw.

Would you like a lie to dream on?

 A minstrel's lay of exotic places

 to build your own phantasies?

While I, a mere reality merchant, deal in daily bread and bored—

 To tears, to tears we go . . . daily, daily to and forth

 A helpless pace we keep out back to show our friends—so
 on and so fro.

Gone through your dream, green door, do you swear they are
 more real?

 Set aside some madness for your late years . . .

 that's when you need it most.

Madness, like a fire, to keep you warm against the icy intrusions
 of REAL

 against the cold blast of feeble days and wandering
 hours

Old men and women are not luxurious, just delicate . . .

 as bronze

 spun from the copper and tin.

Leather-wood pillars on a plain of mirrors . . .

 reflecting on their solitude,

Will they tell you of a golden past

Will you leap, unknowing, into their splendor?

Is dreaming the craft?

 Living the art?

— *Phillipp Carey*

Hosanna

Hosanna sing Hosanna
Let ring new words of prophecy
 Dark gods of old ages crumble
 into deserved dust
 New gods rise from unformed
 dreams
Find now new paths the way
 to worlds untried
 and as yet unspoiled
 plant seeds of justice
 and harvest love.

— *Michael Wright York*

For C.K. Williams

It wasn't raining
 really
But I need this image
 You know?
And in the gray bodies
Raining words
You stood
Smiling gently
 ironically?
Like some young god
With shit coming out of your mouth
And I kept thinking
The rain's going to wash it all away
And I kept thinking
So what?

— *M. Marcuss Oslander*

Samson

That clown of Gaza
Come down from trials
Hairless caution upheld
And mocked to baal-dangling
Slavery

Demanded by soft scissor
Broken to gristmill
Old man slayer
with reason
Particle grinding
For feeding geldings and oxen
This once rough-hero eyeless
Beneath the ant hell
And without pride

Judge fester
Jehovah traitored
And the sweet honey baptism
By domestic bee pinched
And plucked
He
Who had sacked the lion's corpse
Altar fratricide and symbol.

Now a maiden forever until

A touch of the sun
And fingers of nature
And from the skull a forest
Erupts
Exploding deserts to the mind
And triumph upon coined temples
Ripping apart the mason's ribs
A warrior again
Assuming the star-bred fist of gods
Destroying four walls
And the smug giggle of courtly eunuchs.

— *Robert C. Ruggiero*

Cataract

Oh, she.
She screaming
She laughing
and her eyes,
at midnight,
like pearls at noon.

Tenement pipe attack
begins.
Little hands grabbing
for morning milk.

In the pot she plants,
she plants
a synonym for time.

And she.
She breathes
She drowns
sewn inside
some baby carriage
netting

Fish bones sit in her right eye
too frozen to reflect.

— *Claudia Stephens*

The Rogue of Health

The arctic-wand

And in his course, pioneer

Skua tutored
In this icy womb
Predator's balm and oxen's torment
In this land of cold temples
He provokes hot laughter

No gospel but dreamed volcano
No terror but sparkless dawn
And making glacial pores
Sweat athletics
This christ of struggling fire

White tusks to burning flesh
Hard and meltless for salvation
Though crazy with heat.

— *Robert C. Ruggiero*

The Queen's Old Clothes

A Queen,
she is a queen.
She sleeps among
garden flowers—
every fortnight

lilies, she smells sweet

Her ladies
dress her
in silver ribbons.

She races
past heavy willows
thru Bluefield
to Chancingham

It is there she meets
with parody
her own
and the
night's.

— *Claudia Stephens*

To Her Rationale

How complex
You always surrender
To that funhouse of truths
And then by my dying you say
I become part of your roots.

But I am thirst now

And I feel the liquor beneath
Your skin.
A sip from the horn ago
I touched your animation
The only moment to relax
In this mythology of drying.

Remember the fingertips of the age?
The hot humor piercing the mist?

I swear this poor god
Grows drunk on the memories
A single drop suffices
And always with you
My dumb reservoir
With you.

— *Jed O. Helium*
Barsoom Farm
Arizona

i reached to bite my nails
and ate the ticket.
 imagine my surprise
 only blood tipped fingers.
the window shades flap
 in and out
 in and out like scabs.
 the night oozes.
 it is an old wound.
the train rumbles
 passengers scatter
 intense on the journey.
even an old couple
 have in senility a destination.
 they've slouched in their seat
 searching for peace.
they seem so contented
 sneaking through darkness.
 perhaps at their age they have found it
 many seats in front.
are they eloping?
 i know a ladder—don't ask how—
 is in their suitcase
 having placed them over above once.
the beer drunks are giggling, insulting
 cosey in their belching club.
 they crawl buttocks suspended
 to the john.
i feel a kinship only to the country crier
 in blue baggy pants.
 next stop he slips away—replaced in monotone.
 travelers board
 avoiding the light touch
 avoiding infection.
“i want out,” i scream, dying, “out!”
 the wheels roll—for eighteen minutes
 in silence.
stung i follow the actions of traveling men.
 suitcases shake in the aisles—multiplying
 and tightlipped. my tongue licks to its route.
 only the pus awaits.

— Ray Holland

Hazy, through the watery veil we pass, uncleaned.
Soaked through to the bone with viscous memory—
Clinging desperately, in ornamental uselessness
Our histories hang like bats to the rafters of our minds.
They flap and squeak and stir us up, then lite again
Leaving us in helpless agitation, . . . wondering, “Why?”

Outside this crumbling wall the commonthink grumbles and
festers.

“Hunger . . . Thirst . . . Lost, the myth of a soul.”
The spirits, one by one, die the painless death of
Centrism and collective honor,

While the histrionic chronicles condemn the greatness now.

When I was young, when I was young
The better song was left unsung
A different spice to save the taste
Of tainted food for thought.

— *Phillipp Carey*

for days i've had insomnia
unable to sleep it off
sleep or even cry anymore—
eyes lie rough on the pillow.
only confusion melts in fluffed feathers
like spit of
a madman—
pale and spreading.
but i must have slept
sometime between contesting
with blankets with pillows
with elusive rest.
for ideas laugh (shrill and wild)
behind corners-desks-places
i haven't reached
in the waking hours.
(great boards creak—
life stirs for a moment)
i imagine all this
teeth ajar
drooling impulsively and
want to roll back
back—forth
scream
take notes or do some
spontaneous thing.
(the house closes a sleepy eye and slumbers)
but then
stunned i forget the laughter
the pain the last tear
won't be completely pried coughed or
even choked out
and no one knows i'm awake
but senseless from dreams
with
no way to express them.

— *Ray Holland*

Sundance

Sundance
danced
the dance of the sun
which is different than
the dance of the moon
where his mustache
would only blur
the light
his lip sticking
in the blurbs of ice cream
stuck in his mustache
tripping his tongue
on love words.

So he took off his shirt
shaved off his mustache
and danced
in the sun
dripping love
words
over her
like hairshirts
or tombstones.

— *M. Marcuss Oslander*

Touched the Mole King

To much rogue inspired
Highway subtle but giving
To the underground

Poaching hunger
With tragic root lust
Mouthing deep embowelled
Earth
Knowledge of the deepest point
Eventual sprouting
For star-dropped comet
Coming home
And yeaing to such madness
Ignoring the tax of yellow phlegm.

Roguish in the christ-well
Not drained clean and resurrected
But vein muscling
Pumping music to the heart.

— *Robert C. Ruggiero*

at the philosophy lecture
he used the brief pause
to lick wounds.
the staged corral was bright
but we all imagined shadows
somewhere hiding.
deliberate silence raised
the dust and whirlwinds
his frame arose and sighed
in Western musing.
the tension flexed
his hand clenched
like a crack he spoke.
“aim carefully—one shot”
he snorted the smoke
of life gunned down;
the pipe slung in his mouth.

— *Ray Holland*

Delusions

We are all
awaiting death
So we sit
fantasize our ends
find them glorious, obsessive
Curiously seeking security
We are
in ourselves
thriving, encouraging
praying for its moment
We give it
our voices
enclose it behind walls
where we condemn
ourselves as slaves
of the only center.

— *Austin W. Fenn Jr.*

Me

Bees are bees
lamps are lamps
horses are horses
lions are lions
I am I.

— *Kathleen York*
Age—6 years

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Ronald Winter

A noiseless patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood
isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast
surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament,
out of itself,
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding
them.

And you O my soul where you stand,
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans
of space,
Carelessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking
the spheres to connect them,
Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the
ductile anchor hold,
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch
somewhere, O my soul.

Walt Whitman